



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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LT. GOVERNOR AIONA PROCLAIMS ADOPTION AWARENESS WEEK

HONOLULU – Lt. Governor James R. “Duke” Aiona, Jr. together with Department of Human Services Director (DHS) Lillian Koller and Heart Gallery Hawaii, proclaimed the week of November 21 Adoption Awareness Week, calling for more adoptive parents for older children with special needs in Hawaii.

“All children, whether they are infants or teenagers with special needs, deserve to have a loving, permanent family where they can be loved and protected,” Lt. Governor Aiona said.

In 2004, 354 children were adopted from state foster care. Currently there are about 30 children whose parents’ rights have been terminated by the Family Court and are still waiting for adoptive families.

Lt. Governor Aiona and Director Koller, after presenting the proclamation thanked adoptive parents present for opening their hearts and welcoming the children into their families.

“We need adoptive parents for our difficult to place foster children,” said DHS Director Lillian Koller. “We’re especially looking forward to working with Heart Gallery to find permanent, loving homes for waiting children.”

Heart Gallery Hawaii seeks to bring the community closer to the faces of Hawaii’s children waiting for a permanent family, especially those who are older and have special emotional, physical and developmental needs. The photographs are taken by professional photographers who volunteer their time to portray children in natural settings that capture their spirit and emotions.

“We are excited that they are here because they help to capture what is unique and beautiful about a child,” Koller said.

The concept of Heart Gallery to heighten awareness of foster children needing permanent homes began in 2001 by a worker with New Mexico Department of Child and Family Services. Heart Gallery has spread to more than 45 states with 60 galleries. The portraits are showcased

in art galleries and museums nationwide. The galleries have had success in finding adoptive homes for waiting children and encouraging prospective adoptive parents to adopt children from foster care.

For more information, contact:

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